

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
Office of the City Manager
Letter to Commission No. 312-2004



To: Mayor David Dermer and
Members of the City Commission

Date: December 16, 2004

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

Subject: X-26 TASER DEPLOYMENT POLICY

The purpose of this Letter to the City Commission is to inform you of the City's policy on the above subject in light of the recent media attention in other jurisdictions in South Florida. The primary purpose of the X-26 Taser device is to provide a non-deadly restraint mechanism to diffuse volatile situations or confrontations without significantly injuring the subject or the officer. In all deployments of the Taser, it is understood that the subject is either arrested or taken into custody pursuant to the Marchmen and Baker Acts.

The X-26 Taser uses an electrical signal to temporarily override the central nervous system and directly control skeletal muscles. This causes an uncontrollable contraction of the muscle tissue which debilitates a person regardless of pain tolerance or mental focus. The device delivers a minimal amount of direct current of less than .0048 amperes in conjunction with high voltage of 50,000 volts per discharge. This causes no significant injuries. This claim is supported by the Miami-Dade County Medical Examiner's Office.

The Taser policy prohibits deployment on juveniles under the age of 13, pregnant women, and elderly persons unless the use of deadly force is justified. The policy is in compliance with the manufacturer's guidelines and public safety standards. The policy also contains stringent supervisory oversight each time the Taser is deployed. A supervisor is required to respond to the scene of each deployment, conduct a supervisory investigation, and document their findings in a Control of Persons report. The X-26 Taser is also equipped with a dataport which houses a computer chip that records and stores the date and time the Taser is deployed. This information can be downloaded for further review and analysis. The Internal Affairs Unit also reviews all Control of Persons reports providing quarterly and annual reports outlining patterns and areas of concern. The Police Department has equipped and trained 134 officers with the X-26 Taser.

From January through November 2004, the Taser has been used 117 times while an arrest was being made. There were 10,541 arrests during this time period of which 303 instances required some level of force to control the subject.

In light of recent events regarding the Taser's deployment by the Miami-Dade Police Department and subsequent concerns raised by community leaders, the MBPD's policy has been closely reviewed. Representatives of the MBPD have also attended community forums with other local police agencies, the Miami-Dade State Attorney's and Medical Offices and members of the Community Relations Board. The Police Department will continue to do everything possible to ensure the X-26 Taser is used only in strict adherence to the Taser deployment policy.

Should you need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

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